

**Annual Report to the
North Carolina General Assembly**

***Surface Water Identification and
Training Certification Course***

2017

Water Resources



**NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

<http://portal.ncdenr.org>

Surface Water Identification and Training Certification Course Annual Report – 2017

In accordance with G.S. 143-214.25A Section 4.(b)

Background: The Surface Water Identification Training and Certification (SWITC) Course is offered by the Division of Water Resources, Water Quality Programs (formerly known as the Division of Water Quality prior to August 1, 2013, and hereinafter referred to as “DWR”) to comply with N.C. General Statute 143-214.25A. This statute requires DWR to train and certify staff within the North Carolina Forest Service (NCFS), local governments with delegated riparian buffer programs, and DWR. This training certification is required to determine where surface waters are present and thus where the riparian buffer rules apply.

Courses: Between August 1, 2016 and September 30, 2017, DWR offered three SWITC training courses. These courses took place August 17-19, 2016 at the Archdale Building, November 15-18, 2016 at NCSU’s Booth Field Learning Lab (Lake Wheeler Road facility), and May 16-19, 2017 at NCSU’s Weaver Labs (NCSU main campus) in Raleigh. Due to lack of grant funds, DWR has partnered with NC State University to offer classes. Below are summaries of the courses:

August 2016

- 10 students attended.
- 10 students were DWR staff.

November 2016

- 24 students attended.
- 4 students were DWR staff.
- 1 student was NCFS staff.
- 3 students were from local governments with delegated local buffer programs.
- 3 students were from other local and state agencies (Wake County Soil & Water Conservation, Georgia Southern University).

May 2017

- 29 students attended.
- 3 students were DWR staff.
- 5 students were NCFS staff.
- 6 students were from local governments with delegated local buffer programs.
- 5 students were from other local and state agencies (City of Raleigh, City of Gastonia, Wayne Soil & Water Conservation)

Certifications: DWR issued 9 new certifications in August 2016, 8 new certifications in November 2016 and 13 new certifications in May 2017 to DWR staff, NCFS staff, and local government staff as a result of this course. These 30 individuals are certified to determine where surface waters are present and thus where the riparian buffer rules apply. DWR also issued 16 training certificates in November 2016 and 14 training certificates in May 2017 to

other individuals that successfully completed the course. These 30 individuals are not eligible to be officially certified because they do not meet the certification criteria in G.S. 143-214.25A.

Effectiveness: DWR consistently receives positive feedback about this course. The class also fills quickly upon opening of registration and consistently carries a waitlist. DWR asked the participants to rate their level of knowledge before the course (on a scale of 1-5), and the average was 1.8 in August 2016, 2.4 in November 2016, and 2.4 in May 2017. DWR asked the participants to rate their level of knowledge again after the course, and the average was 4.1 in August 2016, 4.3 in November 2016, and 4.4 in May 2017.

Recommendations: DWR always reviews the course evaluations completed by the students and makes adjustments to the course as needed based on that feedback. DWR will continue to solicit feedback and make improvements to future courses.